

**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **Falcon Friday – May 16: Watch Researchers Rappel over City Hall to Determine if Peregrine Chicks are Boys or Girls**

**Event:** San José City Hall’s online reality show, starring three baby falcon chicks, takes a dramatic turn this Friday when a UC Santa Cruz researcher makes a Spider Man-like descent into the chicks’ nesting area, rappelling over the top of the 18-story San José City Hall.

Viewers around the world will be glued to their computers and local fans will gather at City Hall to watch as parents Carlos and Clara work to fend off the “intruders” who are entering their nest. At the end of the biologist’s visit, falcon fans will find out if Clara and Carlos’s youngsters are male or female. While in the nest, the biologist will place identifying bands on the youngsters and determine the youngsters’ genders.

Join Mayor Chuck Reed, City Councilmembers, Glenn Stewart from the University of California’s Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, and falcon fans from throughout the area for this remarkable event.

**When:** Friday, May 16, 2008  
7:45 a.m. – Researchers prepare for descent  
8 a.m. – Biologist Brian Latta rappels down to the nestbox ledge  
8:20 a.m. – Researchers determine falcons gender (estimate)

**Where:** San José City Hall, South side, on Fifth Street off of East San Fernando.  
200 E. Santa Clara Street  
San Jose, CA 95113

**Who:**

- Mayor Chuck Reed, City of San José
- Glenn Stewart, University of California’s Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group
- Brian Latta, University of California’s Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group
- Falcon fans

**Visuals:** Researcher Brian Latta will rappel over the top of City Hall and into the nest. Based on last year’s Banding Day, expect amazing aerial displays, loud “cakking” and shrieking, and dive bombing runs by Carlos and Clara as they seek to protect their young from this “intruder.” The top floors of the exterior stairwell at City Hall have already been closed to prevent attacks.

**Note:** To protect these wild birds, there is no “up close” access to the nest.

The nest-view of the banding activities will be visible on Falcon Cam at [www.scpbrg.org](http://www.scpbrg.org). The young chicks are visible daily via FalconCam, and the City of San José and Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group invite news organizations to use this footage.

Best views of the rappelling and Clara and Carlos in flight:

- Fifth Street, just off San Fernando on the south/rear side of City Hall
- From the Roof of the Fourth Street Garage (enter on Fourth between Santa Clara and San Fernando, drive to the top, or take the elevators closest to San Fernando to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor and walk one flight to the top).

**Background:** Since their birth on Earth Day 2008, the world has been watching the progress of the three young peregrine falcons born in a nest box high atop a utility shaft on the 285-foot tall, Richard Meier-designed San José City Hall. Since the chicks hatched on April 22, the FalconCam has averaged 18,000 visits each day.

This is the first group of young for City Hall falcons Carlos and Clara. Last year, Clara and her previous mate José successfully hatched and raised a boy, Hiko, and two girls, Spirit and Esperanza. Esperanza has since been located by East Bay birdwatchers living on the Siebel building off Hwy. 880 in Emeryville.

After José's disappearance last fall, falcon fans watched as two tiercels (males) vied for Clara's affections. After an early morning battle in the air above City Hall, Carlos emerged the victor and began his pursuit of Clara in earnest. The FalconCam went live on Valentine's Day and the first egg was laid on March 13. One of the four eggs did not hatch, and biologists will remove the egg for tests. A recent study has identified impacts to falcon eggs from flame retardants in the environment.

The young falcons are about to face their greatest challenge – learning to fly. Researchers estimate they will fledge as early as the first week of June.

The City of San José has asked San José children ages 5 to 17 to help name the youngsters. May 16 is the deadline for entries to be postmarked or e-mailed for the falcon naming contest. For details, visit [www.sanjoseca.gov/mayor](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/mayor), and click on the "Name that Falcon" banner.

More than 1,700 people belong to the online falcon discussion group (<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/SanJosePeregrines/>) and members have joined from as far away as Italy, Bolivia, and The Netherlands.

In 1970, only two known pairs of peregrine falcons remained in the wild in California. Today, thanks to extraordinary conservation work, there are nearly 250 nesting pairs, including City Hall's Carlos and Clara.